New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District
Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus

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Smith Statement on UMDNJ Court Agreement

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Congressman Chris Smith (NJ-04) released the following statement about the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey agreement not to require nurses in the same day surgery unit to assist abortions against their will.

"**UMDNJ's coercive abortion participation policy announced in September was a blatant violation of the rights of its health care professionals**," said Smith, the Co-Chair of the Congressional Pro-life Caucus since 1982. "**The right to conscience is a federally protected fundamental right that cannot be abridged, undermined or violated in any way**.

"**Due to the brave voices of these 12 nurses and the diligent work of their attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund, the hospital has finally agreed to respect their rights. The nurses may continue to provide compassionate life-affirming care without being complicit in the destruction of innocent human life**.

"**UMDNJ argues that sometimes so-called safe, elective abortions put women in life-threatening situations. When an abortion threatens to take the life of both the baby and the mom, the pro-life nurses have always been willing to step in, if needed, to preserve the life of the mother until the emergency code team arrives**.

"**Now it is the hospital's responsibility to make sure respect for conscience is implemented through a hospital-wide policy without nuance, loopholes, ambiguity or small print. A durable, transparent and effective means of monitoring compliance with federally protected conscience rights must be put in place to ensure that no-one at UMDNJ, including the nurses who asserted their federally guaranteed rights not to participate in any way in the killing of an unborn child are harmed, subjected to any discrimination or retaliated against now or at any time in the future**."

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